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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6697
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0609
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4140
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7699
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5258
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3343
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1041
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001031

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STATE FOR EAP AND IO; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMESE REGIME TALKS RESTRAINT BUT CONTINUES
ABUSES

REF: RANGOON 1018 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol Officer Sean O'Neill for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (C) Summary. Embassy contacts confirmed authorities sentenced four NLD members to prison terms for their alleged roles in last month's protests, including an 85-year-old man.

NLD sources reported three members of the NLD's youth wing were arrested in Mandalay on October 14. NLD Spokesman U Myint Thein's wife has not heard news of her husband since his arrest and is concerned for his health. The regime claimed 80 percent of those detained have been released after pledging not to protest again. Pro-democracy and opposition activists however remained skeptical of the government's figures and noted any pledges were likely obtained under extreme duress. End Summary.

12. (C) Embassy sources reported that in the past week, authorities sentenced four NLD members from Rakhine State to lengthy prison terms for their alleged role in last month's protests. NLD officials told us Kyaw Khine, the 85-year-old NLD chairman of Taunggyok township, and NLD member Ko Min Aung were each sentenced to seven and a half years in prison on October 15. Last week, authorities sentenced NLD members Tun Kyi and Than Pe to four and a half years each, according to the NLD. The men were reportedly charged with violating the Emergency Provision Act which allows authorities to imprison those deemed to be a threat to public order and stability. Family members reported they were not permitted to attend their relatives' trials, which were also closed to the public. A local reporter for Reuters (protect) told us a fifth party official, Sein Kyaw will be tried later this week.

13. (C) Mandalay NLD officials confirmed police arrested three members of their youth wing the night of October 14. Ko Wunna Aung, Ko Ye Min Zaw, and Ko Soe Khine Win were on the run and reportedly hiding in Sagaing Division when they were picked up by authorities. A fourth party member, Shwe Maung (aka Khamauk Gyi), reportedly managed to evade arrest that night but was detained the next day near Mandalay. NLD official Han Thar Myint said he believes close to 300 party members have been arrested since the latest crackdown began in September and commented many of those who remain free are

in hiding.

¶4. (C) The wife of detained NLD spokesman U Myint Thein told us she has not heard from or about her husband since his arrest on September 26. Swe Swe Thein said she visited Aung Tha Pyay detention center near Rangoon on October 5 to inquire about him but was turned away by authorities. On October 10, police acknowledged to her that U Myint Thein had been interrogated at a police barracks in Mingaladown township, but claimed he had since left and provided no further information regarding his whereabouts or condition. Swe Swe Thein informed us her husband suffers from chronic ulcers and did not take enough medication with him at the time of his detention. She has tried to give authorities more medicine to pass to her husband but said so far they have refused.

¶5. (C) On October 17, the regime's mouthpiece daily, The New Light of Myanmar, claimed authorities have released 2459 of the 2927 persons they claim have been detained since last month. According to the article, 190 persons from Rangoon remain in custody while 278 from other parts of the country are still being held. The New Light claimed that those who were released had unwittingly joined the demonstrations and had signed pledges not to do so again.

¶6. (C) While our contacts said the New Light of Myanmar's total figure of those arrested may be accurate, they believed far more detainees remain in custody. They also noted that any pledges were likely obtained under duress. The Australian Ambassador told Charge d'Affaires he learned over 100 detainees have been charged with crimes in Mandalay and that the regime will shortly charge over 1,000 in Rangoon.

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He expects all will receive sentences ranging from three to twenty years, partly to remove them from participating in any national referendum.

¶7. (C) Comment. The continued arrests and criminal charges against detainees show that the Than Shwe regime has no intention of pursuing dialogue or genuine reconciliation. Instead he is counting on international attention to shift away from Burma leaving Than Shwe ensconced in power. As terrible as the videos and photos of the military's brutal crackdown were, the situation in the prisons and detention centers must be even worse. Than Shwe appears determined to silence Burma's pro-democracy movement. End Comment.

VILLAROSA